

Review

Bednárová-Gibová, K. (2014) *The English Language through the Prism of the Centuries*. Prešov: Filozofická fakulta Prešovskej univerzity. 94 pp.

Bednárová-Gibová, K. (2018) *Selected Chapters in English Lexicology. Part I: Lexical Semantics and Lexicography*. Prešov: Vydavateľstvo Prešovskej univerzity. 113 pp.

Klaudia Bednárová Gibová, a linguist based at Prešov University in Slovakia, continues publishing textbooks which address those areas of linguistics which are indispensable for the complete understanding of the principles that govern language, but which are not central in the curriculum of philological studies. Thus, after her monograph *Non-literary and Literary Text in Translation* (2012), which introduced students and other readers to translation procedures, methods and strategies, illustrating them through a comparison of approaches to translating two fundamentally different types of text, Bednárová-Gibová's list of publications has been recently extended by two textbooks. The first of them, *The English Language through the Prism of the Centuries* (2014) outlines the history but also the present state and foreseeable future of the English language. The latest addition to this line, *Selected Chapters in English Lexicology (Part I: Lexical Semantics and Lexicography)* (2018) can serve as an introduction to the study of lexicon, with the main focus on semiotics, semantics and application of lexicological analysis in lexicography. The fact that this textbook is Part 1 implies that the author is going to supplement it with a second part in the near future, which should include word formation, phraseology and probably also an expanded survey of geographical, social and functional varieties of English lexis. The first textbook (2014) is aimed at Master's students of English, the other (2018) at undergraduate students.

The English Language through the Prism of the Centuries (2014) is a modern overview of the history of English and its implications for the present state of the language. It shares with classical books focusing on historical and comparative linguistics, such as Baugh and Cable's *A History of the English Language* (originally 1935, 3rd ed. 1951), a section outlining Proto-Indo-European to Proto-Germanic, Old English, Middle English and later phonological changes, but it does not place an unnecessary emphasis on them. Similarly to the practical textbooks by Hladký (such as *An Old English, Middle English and Early-New English Reader*, 1998, *A Guide to Pre-Modern English*, 2003) and Kavka's *Past and Present of The English Language* (2009), which are used at the English departments of Czech universities, Bednárová-Gibová's book contains extracts from a few literary works which are considered crucial for given periods of English literature, and they serve to demonstrate the characteristic linguistic features of these periods in language development. Although Bednárová-Gibová did not include OE, ME or ENE dictionaries or glossaries, unlike the above-quoted textbooks, she partly compensated for this absence with Modern English translations of OE and ME texts. Two structural components are additional benefits of her book, namely questions after each chapter and several tests at the end.

The modern approach of the subject matter of the history of English and the author's lexicologist and stylistic background are also evident in the final chapters, as she does not

stop in her efforts with the outline of Early-New English. Chapter 5 (Speaking Proper: Modern English (1750-1900)) is devoted to a linguistically often insufficiently represented period, viz. Modern English, to its grammatical prescriptivism, fast growth in vocabulary, particularly in terminology of science, rise in the number of authoritative lexicographic works, and rich and varied literature. The 6th chapter (The Times they Are A' Changing: late Modern English (1900-present)) might be more likely to be found in a textbook of lexicology or stylistics, but it is fully functional and relevant here. Bednárová-Gibová pays attention to the rise in the numbers of second language speakers of English, quoting not only Kachru's model of World Englishes (1985), but also Modiano's models of international English (1999) and Graddol's diagram of English proficiencies around the globe (2006). Lexical expansion, colloquialisation, prestigious national standards and dialects, the role of English as a lingua franca and other present-day aspects are highlighted in this chapter.

Bednárová-Gibová even goes further, formulating some predictions for the future of the language, based on the current trends (such as ongoing diphthongisation, simplification in the system of consonants, fragmentation into different Englishes, globalisation, varieties of English on the Internet and in digital media (cf. the focus in Crystal 1997/2003 and similar sources). Bednárová-Gibová is not the first to include such predictions, e.g. Kavka discusses the phonological, lexical and grammatical trends in Modern English in great detail in a whole chapter (2009: 133-151), and even as early as in the 1930s, Baugh and Cable discussed foreseeable developments in notes titled "The Future of English Language", "Will English Become a World Language?", "Cosmopolitan Vocabulary", etc. (1935/1951, 4-10). The same approach is taken in the short outline of historical linguistics by Schendl (2001), in Viney (2008), Crystal (2003) etc., but Bednárová-Gibová fails to discuss some important issues mentioned there, such as language planning, efforts to eliminate sexist and racist bias in language, convergence of languages and change of meaning (Schendl 2001). Especially the last mentioned aspect of vocabulary development would have contributed to the otherwise attractive and logical conception of this textbook. On the other hand, consistent attention to syntactic development, outlines of the historical and cultural backgrounds of the periods of development of English, maps and diagrams, as well as concise summaries of each chapter, to mention the components so far ignored in this review, make the book a very comprehensive, attractive and student-friendly resource.

Bednárová-Gibová's *Selected Chapters in English Lexicology. Part I: Lexical Semantics and Lexicography* (2018) is rather an introduction to English lexicology and lexicography. The asset of the book is that the current author gained precious experience from teaching the discipline for several years, which helped her to rethink and redesign such a basic course with a clear aim at making it logical, practical and relevant to the needs of undergraduate students. Consequently, she starts with identification of the position of lexicological study in the system of linguistic disciplines, and goes on to outline the rudiments of semiotics, followed by a discussion of words and word meanings, stratification of English lexis, meaning relations between lexical items and closely associated lexical fields. She has devoted a whole chapter to branching and non-branching hierarchies and proportional series (based on the seminal

work by Cruse 1986), which are often not dealt with in much depth in lexicological textbooks, although they are prime examples of organised lexical sets.

Bednárová-Gibová has excerpted a large number of sources and, apart from reference to authoritative lexicological and more specialised lexicographical, semiotic, historical linguistic, terminological, semantic, stylistic, etc. resources of mostly Anglo-American authors, she also researched Slovak (Kvetko 2005, Štekauer 1993, 2000, Dolník 2007, etc.), Polish (Włodarczyk-Stachurska and Kleparski 2015), German (Lipka 1992, Lančarič 2016), Czech (Peprník 1992, Vachek 1974, Kolář 2006, etc.), Russian (Mednikova 1987) and Spanish (Fuster-Márquez 2012) textbooks of lexicology and lexicography. This proves the author's systematic approach to the design of the book and her appreciation of didactic empiricism. This has also led her to emphasising some aspects of lexicon where it often becomes an object of general interest of language users, such as the typology and use of signs, lexical configurations, semantic shift, lexical borrowings, structure of dictionary entries and typology of dictionaries.

To highlight several parts of the textbook which bring a fresh and topical perspective on the continually evolving English vocabulary, chapter 4 (Charting variation in the English lexicon) is of particular value to readers. Bednárová-Gibová combines historical and linguistic views to provide a concise view of all relevant influences on English lexis (subchap. 4.1), and the following subchapter discusses the progressive tendencies in lexis, including the distinction between archaisms, historisms (Lančarič 2016), obsolete and obsolescent words (Kvetko 2009) on the one hand, and neologisms, vogue words (Crystal 2003) and nonce words on the other. Geographical and stylistic stratification are not absent and complement the richness of perspectives from which language development can be observed.

Different approaches to the concepts of a word and word meanings in chapter 3 also go beyond the expectations of a textbook for undergraduate students. However, it might have been more efficient to contrast the concept of a word with that of a lexeme in the same unit (lexical units and lexemes are addressed separately earlier, in subchapter 1.6). The space devoted to delimitation of the scope of lexicological study in the introductory chapter 1, which is standardly considered as a self-standing and well-defined linguistic discipline in Slavic and German-speaking countries, but rather divided between semantics, word-formation, lexical semantics, onomasiology, and etymology in Anglophone linguistics, documents the advantages of the author's thorough research of available sources and a critical comparative approach. The final glossary of terms forms yet another supplement, which a critical reader will appreciate, regardless of whether they consider lexicology with its wide agenda to be a single discipline or not. Both the reviewed books are not only relevant resources for students, but their structure and abundance of perspectives, which are incorporated and logically combined, make them also an enriching read for linguists of various specialisations.

Radek Vogel

References

- Bednárová-Gibová, K. (2012) *Non-literary and Literary Text in Translation*. Prešov: Filozofická fakulta Prešovskej univerzity.
- Blake, A.C. & Cable, T. (orig. 1935, 1951/1991) *A History of the English Language*. 3rd. ed. London: Routledge.
- Blake, N.F. (1996) *A History of the English Language*. Houndmills: MacMillan Press Ltd.
- Cruse, D.A. (1986) *Lexical Semantics*. Cambridge: CUP.
- Crystal, D. (1997, 2003) *English as a Global Language*. 2nd ed. Cambridge: CUP.
- Fisiak, J. (2009) *An Outline History of English. Volume One: External History*. Poznań: Wydawnictwo Poznańskie.
- Hladký, J. *An Old English, Middle English, and Early-New English Reader*. Brno: Masarykova univerzita.
- Kavka, S.J. (2009) *Past and Present of the English Language*. Ostrava: University of Ostrava, Faculty of Arts.
- Kvetko, P. (2005, 2009) *English Lexicology in Theory and Practice*. Trnava: Univerzita Cyrila a Methoda.
- Lančarič, D. (2016) *English Lexicology: Theory and Exercises*. Nümbrecht: Kirsch Verlag.
- Mitchell, B. and Robinson, F.C. *A Guide to Old English*. 5th Edition. Oxford, UK and Cambridge, USA: Blackwell.
- Schendl, H. (2001) *Historical Linguistics*. Oxford: OUP.
- Štekauer, P. (Ed.) (2000) *Rudiments of English Linguistics*. Prešov: Slovacontact.
- Viney, B. (2008) *The History of the English Language*. Oxford: OUP.